



7 June 2005



SAFETY ALERT Another Railcar Electrocution

1. Last weekend an officer in charge of a railcar-movement operation touched or came too close to an overhead power line. This happened while the Soldier was climbing on an armored vehicle loaded on a railcar. The Soldier now has electrical burns on about 70 percent of his body. The accident is under investigation and many details are unknown, but one fact is clear: climbing on loaded railcars is dangerous.

2. When I took command of USAREUR in 2002, I issued Bell Sends #1 about Deployment Safety. In it, I specifically addressed the dangers of coming too close to overhead power lines. Within 90 days after that message was issued, a Soldier conducting security checks on vehicles on a railcar came into contact with power lines and was severely burned. Two months ago, a German youth was electrocuted and killed while climbing on one of our armored vehicles loaded on a railcar.

3. In Bell Sends #20-05, I asked you to review AE Regulation 55-4 and AE Pamphlet 385-15 to familiarize yourselves with USAREUR policy that prohibits climbing on loaded railcars. That policy is clear: From the time a train is being loaded for departure to the time it is ready to be unloaded, no one will climb on the railcars or on the loaded vehicles for any purpose. Leaders—officers and NCOs alike—must lead by example and enforce this policy. Only through leader engagement will we finally see an end to the needless tragedies associated with rail overhead power lines. Reiterate and reemphasize this policy to prevent any future tragedies:

- Leaders, ensure your Soldiers and civilian employees understand this policy and the hazards of overhead power lines. All Soldiers and civilians supporting rail operations or performing security duties on trains must adhere to this policy. **Remember—Electricity flowing through an overhead rail line can arc as much as three feet to a human body. It is not necessary to touch the powerline or even come close to it—Get within three feet and you will likely be electrocuted.**

- Soldiers and civilians, talk to your families and make sure they understand this policy and the dangers of violating it. I want to ensure your children's safety by ensuring they understand the dangers of climbing on railcars.

4. Make sure everyone in your organization and in your family reads this message. Keeping one another safe is critical to our well-being and our readiness as we continue to execute with excellence Any Mission, Anywhere!

B. B. BELL
General, US Army
Commanding

ANY MISSION, ANYWHERE!

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